

Cumberland National Bank
(United Jersey Bank)
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
59-61 East Commerce Street
Bridgeton
Cumberland County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1193

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CUMBERLAND NATIONAL BANK (UNITED JERSEY BANK)

HABS No. NJ-1193

Location: 59-61 East Commerce St. at Laurel Street, Bridgeton, Cumberland County

Significance: This formal, Victorian commercial building designed by Hazelhurst & Huckel reflects the late nineteenth-century prosperity enjoyed by Bridgeton, a major urban center in South Jersey, and the impact there of architectural trends and designs from broader regional centers such as Philadelphia.

Description: Built in 1886. This ornate, three- to four-story mass is oriented toward the intersection of Commerce and Laurel streets by the placement of its formal, canted and pedimented entrance. The red-brick, load-bearing structure probably has a flat or sloped roof, which is hidden behind a mansard-like roof or parapet. The wide entablature is formed by a row of Romanesque blind arches, molded architrave, and dentil coursing. Each wall is articulated in three dramatic blind arches that reach from the rusticated foundation nearly to the cornice; on the Laurel Street facade, the two outermost bays are reduced in size, but appear on a gable-end projection that is deep enough to contain one window bay. This unit also features a one-story canted bay window with a flat roof obscured by a paneled parapet. The entrance is most evocative of Richardsonian Romanesque styling: the recessed doorway is flanked by a heavy post and lintel arrangement of triple columns with cushion capitals, and a dentiled pediment that contains the chiseled words: "Organized 1816." Here, the decorative capitals become part of a decorative beltcourse detailed with interlacing floral patterns. Above the doorway, wall ornamentation includes recessed pilaster-like panels, a molded-brick arch surround containing a semi-lune shell motif, cornice patterning, and the uppermost pediment with clipped returns, dentils, and "1886" amid a floral patterning. The fenestration is limited to the lower half of the building, and it appears to have been modernized, with the openings retrofitted with display-style, fixed glazing.

History: The first Europeans to settle along the Cohansey River included Richard Hancock, a surveyor for Fenwick who bought 500 acres on the east shore and moved there in 1675; within a decade he erected a dam and sawmill. Soon, more settlers arrived, and the town that sprang up on the west side of the river was called Cohansey; the town that grew up on the east side of the river was referred to simply as "The Bridge." Bridgeton was combined and incorporated in 1865. Residential and industrial buildings affiliated with the plethora of mills clustered along the river were built near East Lake and the commercial center of town. Many of Bridgeton's significant buildings are part of a designated (discontinuous) historic district encompassing 616 acres on both sides of the river; about 2,000 residential, commercial, and institutional structures are included. The popular materials for building here were wood-frame, brick, and a local New Jersey red-brown sandstone. Approximately 80 percent of the residential architecture in the historic district is the double house whose gable-front earned it the local name, "A-Front Double." This type is found elsewhere in town, as well. Often close to an industrial facility, they typically were built and shared by factory workers who occupied one half and rented out the other. Little major alteration has been made to Bridgeton's historic core since the early twentieth century.

Built 1886 by Hazelhurst & Huckel of Philadelphia. Edward P. Hazelhurst (1853-1915) and Samuel Huckel (1858-1917) designed a plethora of buildings from 1881-1900, especially in the Philadelphia-New Jersey area; after the turn of the century they practiced independently. Hazelhurst had worked in the Philadelphia offices of Frank Furness and T. P. Chandler, and he went on to design a range of industrial buildings and private homes. Huckel is credited with the duo's church designs. His award of the commission to remodel New York's Grand Central Station in 1900 ended the partnership.

Some of Hazelhurst's papers are located in the Millville City Hall.

This is one of Cumberland County's oldest banking institutions, having been founded in 1816.

Sources:

"Bridgeton Historic District" National Register nomination. September 1982.

Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991.

Tatum, Sandra, and Roger Moss. Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects (Deceased), 1700-1930. Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1985.

Project Information: The project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian. The project was completed during summer 1992. The project historian was Kimberly R. Sebold (University of Delaware). The photography was produced by David Ames, University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering.